

England at once, provided that in exchange for this concession all British subjects in Russia, including consular staffs and missions, were allowed to leave the country. This was agreed to so far as consulates and civilians were concerned, including those now under arrest at Petrograd, but an exception was made with regard to members of military and naval missions, who would be released only on arrival of Russian Red Cross delegates in France for the purpose of repatriation of Russian soldiers. Result of negotiations was reported by telegraph to His Majesty's Minister at Stockholm for communication to British Government.

"As regards invasion of British Embassy at Petrograd, I had occasion to present to Chicherin and Karahan, in addition to my protest and demands for repatriation embodied in my note to Chicherin of 2nd September, joint protest drawn up by neutral diplomatic representatives at Petrograd (see above) which I also signed, demanding release of all those arrested at Embassy and that Embassy should be handed over to me, and stating that Soviet Government would be held responsible in every respect for consequences of this breach of international law which was quite unique in history. This I reported to my Government at The Hague, through the intermediary of Chicherin for transmission to British Legation there, though I cannot affirm that telegram was sent. Chicherin wished to evade question of release of persons arrested at Embassy, and only agreed to demand for Embassy to be handed over to me, but I told him plainly that it must be all or nothing, and that I would not consent to half measures of this kind. I have further demanded that all documents seized at the Embassy shall be delivered to me.

"The foregoing report will indicate the extremely critical nature of the present situation. The danger is now so great that I feel it my duty to call the attention of the British and all other Governments to the fact that if an end is not put to Bolshevism in Russia at once the civilisation of the whole world will be threatened. This is not an exaggeration, but a sober matter of fact; and the most unusual action of German and Austrian consuls-general, before referred to, in joining in protest of neutral legations appears to indicate that the danger is also being realised in German and Austrian quarters. I consider that the immediate suppression of Bolshevism is the greatest issue now before the world, not even excluding the war which is still raging, and unless, as above stated, Bolshevism is nipped in the bud immediately, it is bound to spread in one form or another over Europe and the whole world, as it is organised and worked by Jews who have no nationality, and whose one object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things. The only manner in which this danger could be averted would be collective action on the part of all Powers.

"I am also of opinion that no support whatever should be given to any other Socialistic party in Russia, least of all to social revolutionaries, whose policy it is at the moment to overthrow the Bolsheviks, but whose aims in reality are the same, viz., to establish proletariat rule through the world. Social revolutionaries will never fight any foreign Power, and any profession which they may now make in this sense are merely a tactical move in their struggle with the Bolsheviks.

"I would beg that this report may be telegraphed as soon as possible in cypher in full to the British Foreign Office in view of its importance."

Following is copy of letter received from British prisoners in the Fortress of Peter and Paul at Petrograd, dated 5th September, 1918:—

"Your Excellency,

"We are not allowed to write letters. We will write to you daily, since the chance of our letters getting through are very remote. Our life here is even worse than in Gorokhovaya 2, and in a sense we are being treated exactly like Russian officers and bourgeois, who are being slowly starved to death here. Our only hope lies in parcels, but delivery of parcels has been stopped for the moment. Those due on Monday last have not yet been delivered. It all depends on the caprice of some one in authority, and he seems very capricious. Surely we are entitled to be treated like prisoners of war and to be inspected by neutrals, to have the right of buying food, of getting news, of sending letters, of exercise, of getting clean linen, &c. Apart from the question of food, that of clothing and medical attention are most important. All the prisoners here have a chronic diarrhoea; most of us have now got it. Requests for a doctor, or medicine, or complaints to the commandant, all receive no attention. In short, our treatment is absolutely inhuman.

"Following is a short account of our treatment since Saturday last. We were never told why we were arrested, and from the first all requests, &c., to see you have been contemptuously and rudely refused. We reached Gorokhovaya at 6 P.M. on Saturday, and, after questioning of an aimless sort, we were put, at 8 P.M., in a room

No. 5.

Mr. Lindley to Mr. Balfour.—(Received September 11.)

(Telegraphic.)

Archangel, September 6, 1918.

I HAVE just received news of murder of Captain Cromie by Bolsheviks, and accusations of latter against him.

Fact is that gallant officer devoted his whole time at Petrograd to the service of his country. His first object was to prevent Baltic fleet falling into German hands; he then helped in evacuating valuable stores, and latterly gave most of his attention to plans for preventing a German advance on Vologda. These activities, carried out for months in daily danger of his life, brought him more or less into co-operation with Russians hostile to Bolshevik régime and therefore claimed as reactionaries.

His plans may very well have included destruction of certain bridges as Bolsheviks declare. In Captain Cromie, His Majesty has lost a most gallant, capable, and devoted servant.

No. 6.

Sir M. Findlay to Mr. Balfour.—(Received September 18.)

(Telegraphic.)

Christiania September 17, 1918.

FOLLOWING is report by Netherlands Minister at Petrograd, the 6th September, received here to-day, on the situation in Russia, in particular as affecting British subjects and British interests under Minister's protection:—

"Sir,—On 30th August I left for Moscow, largely in connection with negotiations for evacuation of British subjects from Russia. The same day Uritski Commissary at Petrograd, for combating counter-revolution, was assassinated by a Jewish student Kanegiesser, whose father is a wealthy engineer and holds a very good position at Petrograd. This murder was at once attributed by the Bolshevik authorities and Bolshevik press (only existing press in Russia) to French and English.

"That same night Consul Woodhouse and Engineer-Commander Le Page were arrested at 1 A.M. in the street. Every effort was made the next day (31st August) by my secretary, M. van Niftrik, to obtain their release, and that of Consul Woodhouse was promised for the afternoon.

"At 5 P.M. on the 31st August, when Consul Bosanquet and Acting Vice-Consul Kimens, who had been busy the whole day with M. van Niftrik in connection with his attempt to obtain release of the arrested and were heading to the Embassy and were near the Embassy building, they were warned not to approach the Embassy, told that it had been occupied by Red Guards, and that two persons had been killed. They at once decided to head back to find M. van Niftrik and asked him to endeavour to secure entry into the Embassy. While driving slowly away from Embassy their car was stopped by Red Guards in another car, one of whom levelled a revolver at them and told them to hold up their hands. They were searched and had to give their names and rank, but to their great surprise were allowed to proceed. M. van Niftrik drove with them to Gorokhovaya 2, headquarters of the Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, to which persons arrested are usually taken, and where Mr. Woodhouse was confined. He had a long interview with the commandant of Petrograd, Shatov, and strongly protested against the unheard of breach of International Law which had taken place, and demanded to be allowed to drive immediately to Embassy to be present at search there. Permission was refused by Shatov, who said that Embassy was being searched because authorities had documents proving conclusively that British Government was implicated in Uritski's murder. When they had left and their car was passing the Winter Palace, staff of British Consulate and of missions, and some civilians who were at Embassy when it was invaded, were seen walking under guard to No. 2 Gorokhovaya.

"A meeting of neutral diplomatic corps was held that night upon the initiative of M. van Niftrik, at which the following points were submitted:—

"1. That immediate release of those arrested should be demanded.

"2. That it should be insisted upon that M. van Niftrik should be present at examination of arrested.

“ ‘3. That attention should be drawn to gross breach of international law committed by armed occupation of the Embassy, which bore on the door a signed and sealed notice to the effect that it was under the protection of Netherlands Legation, and by refusal to allow M. van Niftrik to be present at the search.’

“The meeting drew up a protest to be presented to the Soviet authorities at Moscow.

“On the 1st September particulars were learnt as to the violation of Embassy. The Red Guards, under the direction of several commissaries, had made their way into the Embassy at 5 P.M. and behaved with the greatest brutality. Captain Cromie, who had tried to bar their entrance, and had been threatened that he would be killed ‘like a dog,’ had fired killing two men. He had then been shot himself, and died nearly instantaneously. The whole staff of the Consulate and Missions and some civilians accidentally present at the Embassy, had then been marched under escort to Gorokhovaya No. 2, where they remained until Tuesday, the 3rd September, when (at 4 P.M.) they were conveyed to the fortress of Peter and Paul.

“During the next few days repeated efforts were made by M. van Niftrik, M. van der Pals, also Consul and neutral Legations to obtain release of those arrested, but without success. M. van Niftrik endeavoured successfully to obtain an interview with Zinovief, President of Northern Commune, on the 1st September; M. de Scavenius, Danish Minister, who expressed profound indignation at what had occurred, saw Zinovief at 9 P.M. on that day, and expressed himself in strongest terms. He was promised that body of Captain Cromie should be delivered up to him and M. van Niftrik, and on the 2nd September they together removed the body to the English Church. The funeral took place in the presence of the whole of the Corps Diplomatique and the greater part of the British and French communities. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack and was completely wreathed with flowers. After it had been lowered into the grave I pronounced following short address in French and English :—

“ ‘In the name of the British Government and in the name of the family of Captain Cromie I thank you all, especially the representatives of the Allied and neutral countries, for the honour you have shown Captain Cromie.

“ ‘Friends, we have all known Captain Cromie as a real friend, as a British gentleman, as a British officer in the highest sense of the word.

“ ‘Happy is the country that produces sons like Captain Cromie.

“ ‘Let his splendid and beautiful example lead us and inspire us all until the end of our days. Amen.’

“The doyen of the Corps Diplomatique, M. Odier, Swiss Minister, gave expression to his deep sympathy and admiration for the late Captain Cromie, who had died for his country.

“In the evening of the 3rd September, no impression having yet been made on the Communal authorities, another meeting of the Corps Diplomatique was held. This meeting was attended by neutral diplomatic representatives, and M. van der Pals, representing the Netherlands Legation. Unexpected feature of the meeting was the appearance of German and Austrian consuls-general. The whole of the body met together at 9 P.M. and proceeded to Zinovief’s residence, where they with difficulty succeeded in obtaining an interview with him. M. Odier strongly protested, in the name of the neutral legations, at action taken by Communal authorities against foreign subjects. He emphasised the fact that for acts of violence committed against foreign subjects in Russia the Soviet officials would be held personally responsible. He demanded that permission should be granted for a neutral representative to be present at the examination of the accused. Zinovief said that he must consult his colleagues on the matter. M. van der Pals afterwards again laid stress on this point. M. Odier was followed by German consul-general, who made a forcible protest in the name of humanity against the terrorism now entered upon by Bolsheviks. He referred in strong terms to ‘sanguinary’ speech of the other day by M. Zinovief, and said that even though French and English arrested belonged to nations at war with Germany, yet it was impossible not to unite with neutral representatives in a strong protest against course now adopted by Bolsheviks.

“I returned to Petrograd yesterday, as I had received a telegram from my secretary urging my return, and could not therefore take responsibility of remaining longer absent from Petrograd, where position, I gathered, must be very bad. Up to to-day situation here has in no way improved. Besides British arrests, numerous

arrests of French citizens have taken place, including that of the commercial attaché to French Embassy, though French consular officers have not so far been touched. Thousands of Russians, belonging to officer and wealthy classes, not excluding merchants and shopkeepers, are being arrested daily, and, according to an official communication, 500 of them have already been shot; amongst arrested there are a large number of women. For last four days no further British arrests have been made.

"Position of British subjects in prison is most precarious, and during last few days constant reports have reached Legation that question whether to shoot or release them has not yet been decided. There seems to be also a strong tendency to regard those arrested as hostages. Those belonging to military and naval missions are probably in most danger, and in present rabid temper of Bolsheviks anything is possible, but there is some hope that consular staff and civilians may be released before matters become still more serious. With regard to members of missions, hope of release seems very small.

"Conditions under which Englishmen at Peter and Paul fortress are kept are most miserable. I was informed yesterday by M. D'Arcy, commercial attaché to French Embassy, just released, that they are crowded together with other prisoners, some twenty in a cell, twenty by ten feet. In each cell there is only one bed, rest must sleep on a stone floor. No food whatever is supplied by prison authorities, and they depend entirely on arrangements which this Legation had made and food furnished by friends and relatives. Rugs, pillows, medicines, warm clothing, and other comforts are being sent from time to time, but great difficulties are experienced in getting these articles delivered. From the 31st August to morning of the 2nd September no food at all was accepted for prisoners. Since then they have received some supplied from outside, but it still remains to be seen whether it will reach them regularly at fortress, though I shall leave no stone unturned to secure its proper distribution. Russian prisoners in fortress appear to be absolutely starving, and this will make question of supply of British subjects even more difficult than it would otherwise be, owing to presence in their cells of famished Russians. I enclose herewith copy of letter just received from British prisoners, which speaks for itself.

"Yesterday evening I endeavoured to see Zinovief in order to inform him of appalling conditions at the fortress, but he absolutely refused to see me. I was equally unable to see Uritski's successor and could only gain access to a subordinate of latter, who behaved with lack of courtesy which may now be expected. I informed him of conditions obtaining in fortress, and he eventually promised to speak to commandant of fortress whom he had occasion to see that night. He refused to give me the number of Zinovief's telephone or name of commandant of fortress.

"As regards situation in Moscow, I can only say that in my opinion it is most grave. Nineteen Englishmen and thirty Frenchmen have been arrested and are kept under the worst conditions. Mr. Lockhart, who was released and subsequently re-arrested, was only saved from being shot on 4th September by my most strenuous exertions. Before I left Moscow a solemn promise was given to me that he would be released, but his position is precarious in the extreme, while all those now under arrest there are in great danger. Mr. Lockhart is accused by Soviet Government of organising a plot to overthrow it, and Bolshevik official and unofficial papers are full of details of alleged conspiracy, while it is asserted that British officials at Petrograd were concerned in plot. Attempt on life of Lenin is of course attributed by Bolsheviks to British and French, and if he should die it is quite possible that all now under arrest at Moscow and Petrograd would be shot.

"At Moscow I had repeated interviews with Chicherin and Karahan. Whole Soviet Government has sunk to the level of a criminal organisation. Bolsheviks realise that their game is up and have entered on a career of criminal madness. I repeatedly told Chicherin, with all the energy of which I am capable, that he must realise full well that Bolshevik Government was not a match for England. England had a longer wind than the Soviets. She would not be intimidated; even if hundreds of British subjects should be executed by order of the Bolsheviks England would not turn one hair's breadth from her purpose. Moment would come when the Soviet authorities, man by man, would have to pay for all the acts of terrorism which they committed. But in spite of persistence with which I drove those facts home, I could not obtain any definite promises from Chicherin but only a few evasive replies and some lies. Bolsheviks have burnt their boats and are now ready for any wickedness.

"As regards original objects of my journey to Moscow—evacuation of British from Russia—I found it necessary to promise that Litvinof should be allowed to leave

about 25 feet by 15 feet, where there were already about fifty arrested Russians—murderers, speculants [*sic*], &c. All beds were already occupied, and we spent the night between the three odd chairs, the floor, and walking about. By morning we were all in the first stages of verminosity, very dirty, tired, and hungry. The first food came at 1 P.M., small bowls of bad fish, soup, and one-eighth of a pound of bread. At 6 P.M. we got another one-eighth pound of bread. We received the same food on Monday also. On Sunday night the room was less full, and we got some sleep. By that time we were also getting used to the journey [*sic*]. Parcels arrived on Monday and eased the food situation. On Tuesday at 4 P.M. we were marched through the streets under escort here. The consul's request for a vehicle for our kit was most rudely refused. Here we were distributed in different cells, size about 20 feet by 10 feet, in order to make up the number twenty. In our cell are thirteen Russians, four of whom are slowly starving to death. They have had no food for three days. After we had been here thirty-three hours, soup came in at 3 A.M., and one-eighth pound of bread. We could not eat the soup; wood, leather, stones, mixed with cabbage and paper, were its main ingredients. So we, too, will sooner or later starve to death. Our immediate need is parcels, but it is essential for you to send some one here on Saturday to see if they have been delivered and to obtain our receipts. Otherwise they will not be delivered.

"Next is medical comforts: (1) for diarrhœa; (2) aspirin. We can get none. Third is some money.

"We will write again to-morrow. We are not allowed to leave our cells. The door is never opened. The w.c. periodically refuses to work, and the atmosphere is appalling.

"Need I say more, save that I hope you will lay the substance of this report before His Majesty's Government.

"With many apologies for giving you this trouble.—(Signed) From British Subjects detained in Peter and Paul."

No. 7.

Mr. Alston to Mr. Balfour.—(Received September 18.)

(Telegraphic.)

Vladivostock, September 16, 1918.

HIS Majesty's consul at Ekaterinburg, Mr. Preston, who left that place on the 1st September, has just arrived here, and has given following information as to fate of Russian Imperial family:—

Ex-Emperor of Russia and Grand Duchess Tatiana were brought from Tobolsk to Ekaterinburg by Bolsheviks on the 1st May, 1918. Emperor was given suitable quarters near British consulate. Rest of Imperial family, including ex-Empress, other three daughters, and Czarevitch arrived a few days later. Members of suite, including Prince Dolgorouki, as well as British and French tutors who came with Imperial family from Tobolsk, were not allowed to remain with Emperor at Ekaterinburg, and returned to Tobolsk. Prince Dolgorouki was kept in prison, where he either eventually died or was killed.

Prince Dolgorouki frequently asked me, as doyen of Consular Corps, at least to try and obtain better conditions of living for Imperial family. It was impossible for me, however, to do anything, and when I interceded for the Princess, whom I said I was protecting as a Serbian ally, I was threatened with arrest. When the Czech advance on Cheliabinsk commenced, the Ekaterinburg Bolshevik Government, who already had considerable friction with Central Bolshevik Government on money matters, began to use threats against the Imperial family as a means of extorting funds from Central Government. When Bolsheviks knew they would have to evacuate Ekaterinburg owing to the approach of the Czechs, they asked the people's commissariés at Moscow what they should do with the Emperor. The reply they received was: "Do whatever you think fit." At a meeting of the Ural Soldiers' and Workmen's delegates held on 16th July, a decision was come to that the Emperor should be shot, and this decision was communicated to him, and sentence carried out by Lettish soldiers same night. However, no trace has ever been found of the body. The rest of members of Imperial family were taken away to an unknown destination immediately after this. It is said that they were burnt alive, as various articles of jewellery have been identified as belonging to them by their old servants, and their charred remains are said to have been found in a house burnt to the ground. It is still thought possible that the